



NEWS RELEASE

California Health and Human Services Agency

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Health and Human Services Secretary Grantland Johnson urges Focus on HIV/AIDS In African American Communities

HIV/AIDS is the number one killer of African Americans ages 25-44 in the U.S.

SACRAMENTO – Noting the disproportionately high number of new HIV/AIDS cases among African Americans, State Health and Human Service Agency Secretary Grantland Johnson today joined other state and national leaders in recognizing National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day and the effort to spotlight the rapidly increasing rate of HIV/AIDS infection among African Americans.

National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day is a nationwide community mobilization effort to bring attention to the national crisis caused by HIV/AIDS among African Americans. An education effort that begins today targets 14 major cities, including Los Angeles and Oakland, California with community forums and free HIV/AIDS testing.

"While all communities have been affected by this disease, HIV/AIDS has reached crisis proportion in the African American community," Johnson said. "It is critical that African Americans get educated, get tested and get involved in fighting this disease to prevent the further spread of HIV/AIDS," Secretary Johnson said.

The African American community has a much higher percentage of new incidents of the disease than their percentage in the overall population warrant, accounting for 54 percent of all new HIV infections in the United States while comprising only 12 percent of the nation's population. Nationally, HIV/AIDS is the number one killer of African American men and women ages 25-44.

In California:

- African Americans make up less than 7 percent of the total population but account for more than 23 percent of all AIDS cases.
- African American men and women tested at state funded sites in 1999 had the highest positive rates compared to other ethnic groups, nearly twice the rate of white men and five times the rate of white women.
- At the end of 2001, there were 21,461 new AIDS cases reported among African Americans.

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Secretary Johnson said the Davis Administration is committed to fighting this terrible disease. Governor Gray Davis added \$12.8 million to the Office of AIDS 2001-2002 budget for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP), bringing ADAP's total allocation to \$276.6 million. ADAP serves nearly 25,000 eligible individuals with HIV.

Additionally, the California Department of Health Services Office of AIDS administers prevention programs geared toward African American communities, including the African American Church Outreach Program, the California AIDS Prevention Campaign, mobile vans that provide outreach and health services to high-risk individuals who do not have access to public health clinics, a people-of-color high-risk prevention initiative, and social marketing efforts in local communities.

For information about National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day events call toll-free, 877-867-1446. For more information about AIDS or HIV testing contact the California AIDS Hotline at 1-800-367-AIDS (2437).

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